

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 03774 281438Z

40

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 NEAE-00 OPR-02 PM-04 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

INR-07 NSAE-00 SAM-01 OMB-01 H-02 SCCT-01 SS-15 /079 W

----- 036947

O R 281328Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9802

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

CIA WASHDC

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY IMMEDIATE

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

COMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 3774

STUTTGART FOR ELG

E.O. 11652: GDS

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 03774 281438Z

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION APRIL 28: SECURITY TURNS DOWN; EDDE-SARKIS

ELECTORAL BATTLE SHARPENS

REF: BEIRUT 3731 (O 271305Z) APR 76

1. SECURITY DETERIORATION TOOK PLACE IN BEIRUT YESTERDAY EVENING, MARKED NOTABLY BY LEFTIST/REJECTIONIST PUSH AGAINST KATAEB POSITIONS IN PORT AREA AND BOMBARDMENT OF RAS BEIRUT BY CHRISTIAN 155MM HOWITZERS. SITUATION CALMED BEFORE DAYLIGHT TODAY AND IS RELATIVELY STABLE AS OF MIDDAY. AS FAR AS WE AWARE, VERY LITTLE TERRITORY GAINED BY LEFTISTS IN PORT ATTACK.

2. SPEAKER APPEARS TO BE GOING AHEAD WITH ARRANGEMENTS FOR MAY 1 ELECTION. ACCORDING TO THE PRO-FRANGIE RADIO, A SPECIAL COMMITTEE WAS ANNOUNCED THIS MORNING UNDER THE DEPUTY SPEAKER TO STUDY SECURITY FOR THE SESSION. REPRESENTATIVES OF VARIOUS FACTIONS ARE ON THE COMMITTEE.

3. YESTERDAY WITNESSED VERBAL BLASTS BY JUMBLATT ON LEFT AND CHAMOUN ON RIGHT AGAINST SPEAKER ASSAAD'S CHOICE OF MAY 1 AS ELECTION DAY. BOTH CONSUMMATE POLITICAL SCHEMERS, THEY EVIDENTLY SAW FORESHORTENED CAMPAIGN AS UNDUE RESTRICTION ON THEIR INALIENABLE RIGHT TO MANEUVER. JUMBLATT DECLARED HIMSELF "SURPRISED" AT THE SPEAKER'S DECISION, WHICH HE ATTRIBUTED PARTLY TO FOREIGN (READ SYRIAN) PRESSURE. JUMBLATT IS DUE TO CONFER WITH RAYMOND EDDE AND TO HOLD A MEETING WITH HIS LEFTIST PARTIES TODAY. SOME OBSERVERS, MEANWHILE, ATTRIBUTE YESTERDAY'S ESCALATION IN FIGHTING TO JUMBLATT'S CRITICISM OF ELECTION DATE. EVIDENCE IS INCONCLUSIVE THAT LEFTISTS STARTED YESTERDAY'S FIGHTING, HOWEVER.

4. AS YESTERDAY SEEMED TO BE EDDE'S DAY IN DEVELOPING CAMPAIGN, TODAY PARADOXICALLY SHOWS RISE IN FORTUNES OF SARKIS. PIERRE GEMAYEL YESTERDAY EVENING CAME OUT FOURSQUARE FOR SARKIS. HE CLAIMED TO BE SPEAKING FOR NATIONAL LIBERALS AND FRANGIE AS WELL AS FOR KATAEB. ALTHOUGH THESE GROUPS ARE SCHEDULED TO HOLD MEETING TODAY TO DECIDE ON A PREFERRED CANDIDATE, GEMAYEL'S REMARK SEEMS CONCLUSIVE INDICATION OF AT LEAST THE KATAEB CHOICE, AND THAT IS THE KEY DETERMINANT ON THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT. GEMAYEL, INCIDENTALLY, ALSO STATED THAT CHAMOUN WOULD NOT RUN, A DECLARATION THAT CHAMOUN HIMSELF CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 03774 281438Z

HAS SO FAR STUDIOUSLY AVOIDED.

5. SARKIS IS DUE TO HOLD PRESS CONFERENCE TODAY. HE WILL PROBABLY THROW HIS HAT IN THE RING FORMALLY (KARAME ALREADY DID SO ON HIS BEHALF

IN MID-APRIL) AND EXPLAIN HIS VIEWS ON ISSUES. KNOWN FOR HIS RETICENCE, SARKIS HAS BEEN OUTCLASSED SO FAR IN CAMPAIGN BY CONSTANT PRESS EXPOSURE EDDE SEEMS ABLE TO ATTRACT. SARKIS MAY BE

MOVING TO CORRECT THIS IMAGE OF SILENCE--WHILE AT THE SAME TIME, HE WOULD HOPE, CONTINUING TO SHOW CONTRAST BETWEEN HIMSELF AND EDDE'S SHOOT-FROM-THE-HIP LOQUACIOUSNESS.

6. SENTIMENT SEEMS STRONG NOW IN POLITICAL CIRCLES THAT NEXT PRESIDENT SHOULD BE EITHER EDDE OR SARKIS. CANDIDACIES OF VARIOUS "COMPROMISE" FIGURES HAVE NOT YET GOTTEN OFF GROUND, AND WITH ELECTION DAY PRESUMABLY SO NEAR AT HAND ALL EYES ARE FIXED ON NECK-AND-NECK BATTLE OF THESE TWO FRONTRUNNERS. ALONG WITH THIS SENTIMENT, THE THEORY THAT THE NEW PRESIDENT SHOULD HAVE NEAR-UNANIMOUS ELECTORAL

SUPPORT IS RECEDING A BIT, FOR A TWO-WAY FIGHT IN THE ELECTION SESSION

LOOKS TO BE UNAVOIDABLE. THE THEORY NOW IS: LET THE TWO MEN RUN IN A "SPORTING" (I.E., FAIR PLAY) ATMOSPHERE, AND THE WINNER WILL HAVE TO GET THE NATION'S SUPPORT LATER. THIS VIEW HAS BY NO MEANS TOTALLY ERASED THE CONTRARY OPINION THAT NEAR-UNANIMITY IS NEEDED, HOWEVER. LEBANON'S PLIGHT MAKES MANY SEE THIS AS A POLITICAL NECESSITY. CONCEIVABLY, ONE OF THE TWO LEADING CONTENDERS MAY RESOLVE THE ISSUE BY WITHDRAWING AT LAST MINUTE BEFORE THE VOTE. THIRD CANDIDATES REMAIN IN THE WINGS, HOPING THAT THE IMPASSE BETWEEN EDDE AND SARKIS WILL STAY UNBROKEN AND COUNTRY'S LEADERS WILL TURN IN UNISON TO ONE OF THEM.

7. IN A SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT YESTERDAY, FATAH BIGWIG ABU SALEH, SPEAKING AT FUNERAL CEREMONIES FOR "FALISTIN AL-THAWRA" EDITOR-IN-CHIEF MOHAMED ABDEL HAFEZ (WHO HAD BEEN KILLED APRIL 24 IN FIGHTING IN

MOUNTAINS), URGED RECONCILIATION AMONG SYRIANS, PALESTINIANS, AND LEBANESE LEFTISTS. ACCUSING CAIRO AND BAGHDAD OF BEING "AT THE ORIGIN OF THE PLOT HATCHED AGAINST LEBANON," ABU SALEH ENVISAGED A SYRIAN/PALESTINIAN/LEFTIST FRONT AIMED AT FOILING "AMERICAN IMPERIALISM" DESPITE THIS VACUOUS RHETORIC, HIS COMMENTS ARE SIGNIFICANT AS SHOWING

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BEIRUT 03774 281438Z

STRONG INTEREST WITHIN FATAH FOR END TO CURRENT DIVISION BETWEEN LEFT AND DAMASCUS.

8. AMBASSADOR MELOY'S COMMENTS YESTERDAY BEFORE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE HAVE ATTRACTED INTEREST IN PRESS HERE. HE IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT "NEGOTIATIONS TO END THE CIVIL WAR WILL BE LONG AND DIFFICULT" GIVEN COMPLEXITY OF SITUATION HERE, AND ALSO THAT PALESTINIANS FORM "A STATE WITHIN THE STATE." HIS PRAISE FOR SYRIA'S ROLE IN THE LEBANESE CRISIS IS ALSO CITED, AS WELL AS CONTINUED US INSISTENCE ON TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF LEBANON.

WARING

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, CIVIL DISORDERS, ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 APR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BEIRUT03774
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760161-0407
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760415/aaaaamao.tel
Line Count: 166
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 BEIRUT 3731
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 APR 2004 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <05 APR 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LEBANESE SITUATION APRIL 28: SECURITY TURNS DOWN; EDDE-SARKIS ELECTORAL BATTLE SHARPENS
TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006